

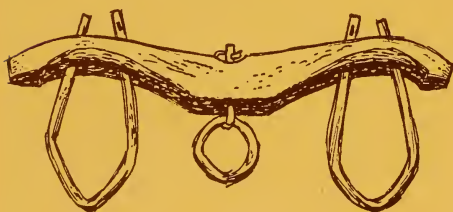
973.7L63
N1863gYluh

Luhrs, Henry E

Increasing importance of Lin-
coln's Gettysburg Address.

LINCOLN ROOM

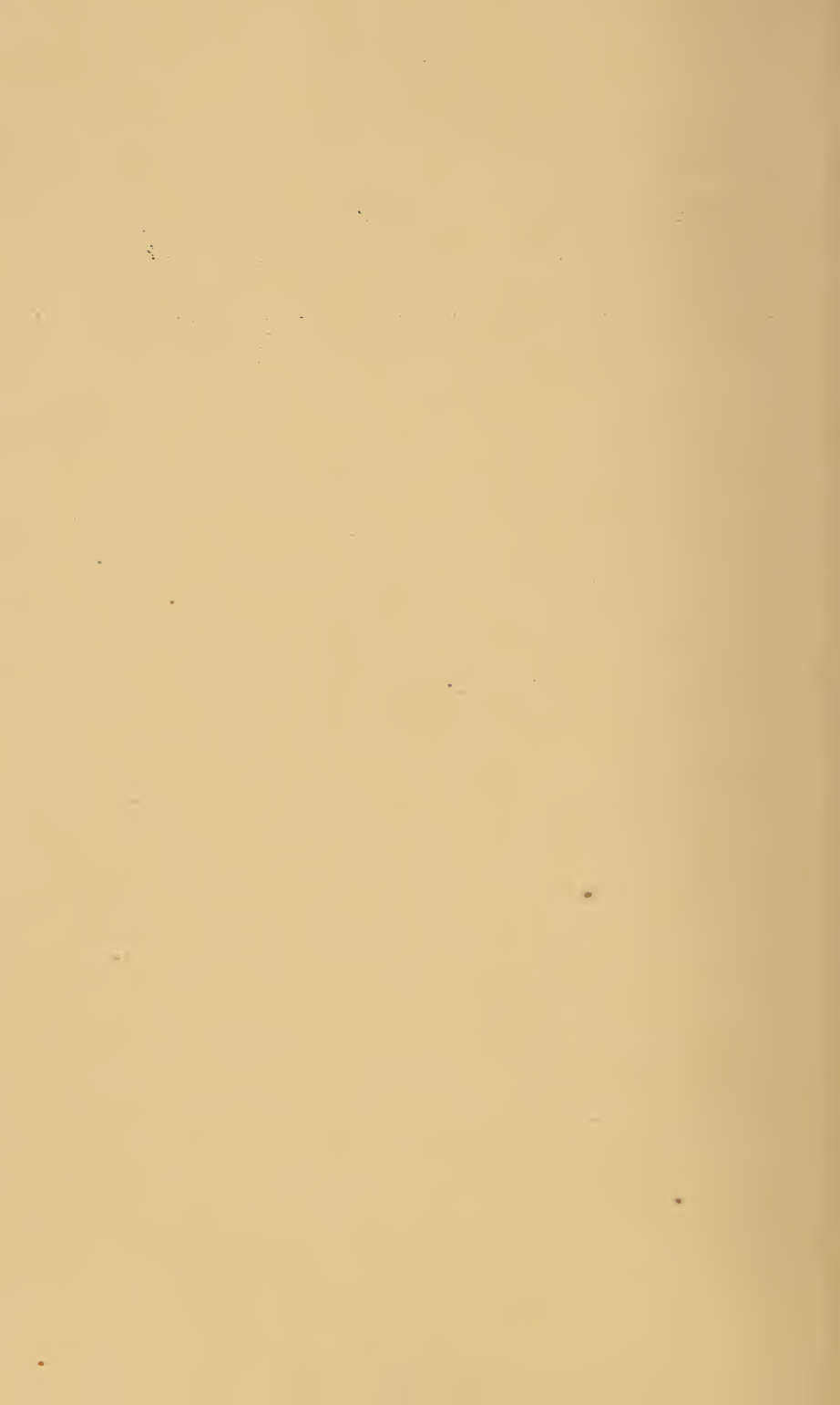
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
LIBRARY



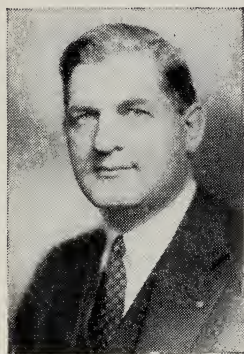
MEMORIAL
the Class of 1901

founded by
HARLAN HOYT HORNER
and
HENRIETTA CALHOUN HORNER

**INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF
LINCOLN'S GETTYSBURG ADDRESS**



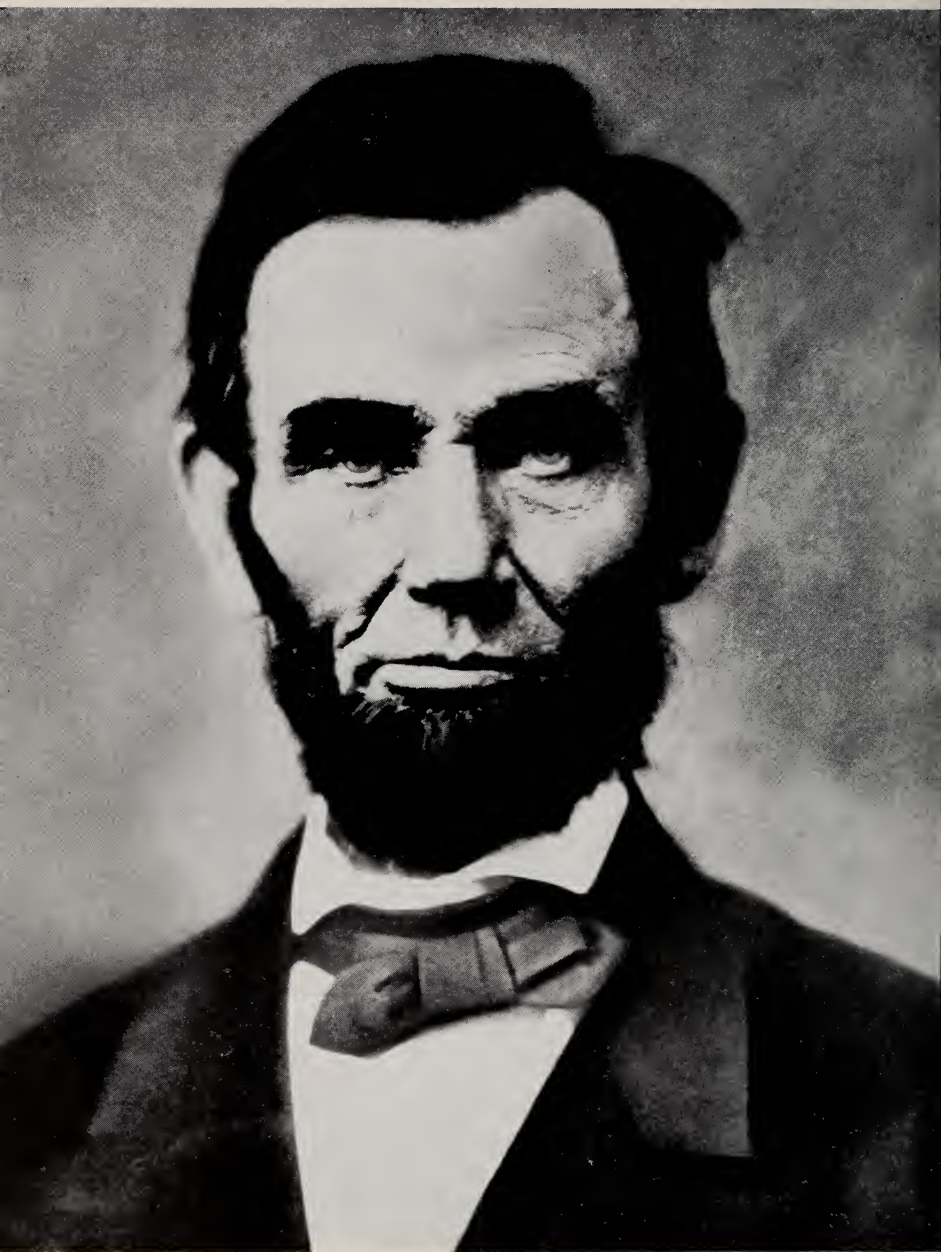
INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF LINCOLN'S GETTYSBURG ADDRESS



HENRY E. LUHRS

Editor's note—The following is the text of an address given by Henry E. Luhrs of Shippensburg before the Lincoln Fellowship of Pennsylvania on Sunday, Nov. 19 at the Hotel Gettysburg. The occasion was the 87th anniversary of Lincoln's Gettysburg address.

**Lincoln Publishers
Shippensburg, Pa.
1950**



Abraham Lincoln

Portrait taken 1863 in Washington, D. C.
about the time of the Gettysburg visit.

293.72.83
11563-8/10/10

Lincoln

You probably wonder why I have been asked to speak on this "Four Score and Seven Years" Anniversary Meeting of our Pennsylvania Fellowship. Lest anyone may think I sought the honor or felt adequate to the occasion, I wish to assure you I'm just a last-minute "fill in".

A year ago I spoke with our President and brought to his attention that the opening words of Lincoln in his dedicatory address could be used to refer to this particular anniversary of the event. Lincoln of course indicated the period of time when our forefathers chose to create a new nation founded on a concept of freedom never before attempted and then through daring steps, they threw off the yoke of tyranny. They implemented their faith and love of liberty in a definite and heart-warming manner, by establishing here a country where men who cherished their God-given Freedom above all else, might live, and work and worship in an atmosphere that was helpful and encouraging and hitherto unknown to mankind. Now an equal period of time has elapsed to put that dedication ceremony performed at Gettysburg, exactly at the midpoint in our country's history. An outstanding program by the Fellowship was to be worked out. Knowing the ability of President John to do the unusual—the intervening year has been one of high hopes and great expectations. It must be said however, that great efforts were made to fulfill our hopes. Unfortunately other plans interfered, and as a result, ten days ago the secretary phoned and said, "You are being called upon to 'help out'." Well, I could never let this grand group down—so you will have to suffer and hear me through. But perhaps we may use this occasion for a bit of soul searching.

Do we, today, have a keen awareness of the import and significance of that message, Abraham Lincoln delivered here, "four score and seven years ago"? I doubt it! A recent survey, made by Bruce Barton, advertising executive, former Congressman and author, famous son of an illustrious author, preacher, teacher and scholar, Dr. William Barton, has been released. It appeared in Friday's Gettysburg Times and may be seen in copies of my hometown paper, the Shippensburg News-Chronicle, given to you. It showed, somewhat after the manner of a Gallup Poll or Public Opinion Polls in 10 cities surveyed, if taken as a representative sample, that seven million American adults have never heard of the Gettysburg Address. Sixteen percent of those who had heard of it are unable to identify Lincoln as the speaker. Fifty four percent of the same group do not know the occasion which formed the setting for it. Nearly everyone guessed wrong about the date—and variations covered a period of 185 years. Only fifteen percent pretended to know the entire address, although thirty-six percent could repeat the first line. Most important however, we learn that only a few people are well informed and understood what it was about.

Think of that—can you imagine such a thing in present-day educated America? Well, let's not be surprised—for I am sure that among those who profess to know what it was, who made the address, when it was delivered, we will find that few are really aware of what it is all about. It is truly a gem of public speaking, a remarkable composition

4/10/10
Herald-Examiner

and excellent English. But its message is more thoroughly comprehended and understood today by thousands of men and women who do not speak nor understand English, and who have learned the words and then the message through their study of translations into their own language. To them it has been and is a great heart-warming and cheering message. It is a ray of hope in an otherwise dark and gloomy world. It bids the weak, the frail, the suffering and helpless of humanity to resist their oppression and hold out—for there is surely a time of better ways and days coming. This is the same old story, men seldom appreciate their blessings-until they have lost them. In this instance at least, men, who have lost, and others who never have known liberty; liberty and unbelievable freedom—such as we enjoy as Americans; have been encouraged to strive for a chance to embrace that which they have been denied.

Dreams!! Oh, what dreams men have had, and lo they now hear and learn from a simple, humble man who became President, and who spoke so clearly, and pointed the sure way to the realization of their dreams.

Comparisons certainly are not necessary—but consider if you will, in the realm of our religious experience. How many of us who profess to be Christians,—actually and fervently embrace Jesus as their personal Lord and Saviour? We listen, and talk, and many of us go to church. Yet do we sincerely believe and accept the Lord Jesus as God, our God, my God? Could we hold to such a conviction and do so little to further His Kingdom here on earth? Yes, many claim the privilege of belonging to His Church, but they act strangely when any opportunity arises, as it will daily, to speak up and demonstrate their belief and convictions. History is full of examples, beginning with the Twelve, who served as His Disciples—While He lived here among men. They deserted Him when the going got rough during His vicarious suffering and death. Even in His Glorious Resurrection they were slow and fearful and could not grasp the truth, nor were they aware of the wonderful significance of the occasion. Many men have been hesitating and faltering since.

As part, of the millions who followed after—who were privileged to be taken into the church as potential believers—have we not missed many real opportunities to testify and understand the significance of our blessing?

Let us not forget Thomas—doubting Thomas, so many are like him. He would not believe—unless he put his finger in the wounds in His hands and thrust his hand into His side. But he did keep an open mind and heart and continued to seek the truth—and the Lord appeared to him as you recall—and compelled him to put his reluctant finger into the wounds, and thrust his hand into that side. Thomas cried out, “My Lord and My God” and that should speak volumes for would-be “Doubting Thomases”, ever since.

To return to our consideration of the Dedication message and our understanding of it. We do much the same with Lincoln’s ideas and message as also with other significant declarations of all truly great

leaders. Why?? Because some are luke-warm, others careless, some doubt, yet others are just plain lazy. Should we be discouraged? Where would we be today if we did not everlastingly keep trying??

To this end, how many of you have read the vibrant and pointed editorial in the Nov. 13th issue of LIFE magazine entitled, "How Bad are U. S. Politics?" Well, I commend it to the consideration of everyone. Among its attention demanding thoughts are these. "We believe that we must take our politics seriously, and do something about it, if we want to survive." "We will have to give good politicians our full faith and reward them with our respect, as well as with salaries . . . We cannot get enough good men if we persist in electing them on the basis of what we think they can *do* for us . . . We can elect good men to office—men who know better than to try to deliver the moon, or we can elect the demagogues who promise us not only the moon but the cosmos. Either a politician is a statesman or he isn't . . . as long as we can be bought off there will always be slick fellows to buy us. As soon as we refuse to be bought we will almost surely find the men of vision who can really help us . . . Who are "we"? The "we" are the nation's vast number of thoughtful voters, the people who try hard to use their ballots for the good of the country . . . If we just threw aside our fatalism about politics, we might suddenly find that we, rather than the members of some pressure group, hold the balance of power. Could be that the only thing wrong with us is that we do not know our own strength."

President John, as you know, was first of all interested in what Lincoln's visit to Gettysburg could mean translated into personal gain as a livelihood. But would you deny him this opportunity and right? Of course not, and in the passing years, while he has been working to make the profit from his efforts around the Lincoln-Gettysburg idea, I'm sure he has absorbed a great deal of real, genuine idealism which surrounds the memory of Lincoln. As a result, he is bigger and better for it. And who knows but what he may do more good than some who will not make any approach, mercenary or otherwise.

Our Secretary Walter, earns a livelihood, superintending the building, maintaining and enlarging this battle park area, so closely associated with Lincoln and the High Water Mark—where the great decisive struggle in the life of our nation took place. That's his career. But you may be sure that every contact and indirect influence of Lincoln here, has affected him, just as surely as the sun has risen each day and in ways he probably knows not of. He will never be the same in his life and character as he was, for Great and Noble thoughts do things to each one who daily contacts that which is associated with noble principles and ideals.

My friend, Ward Stallsmith—could give the Wills House as a permanent Historical monument to the memory of Lincoln here at Gettysburg and have it to his lasting memory—and it probably would be better for him and his children if he did, who knows? But rather likely he will not—and you can not find fault with him for his reluctance. He has at least offered to sell it to those who have had a larger vision of its restoration and preservation for future generations to enjoy—But Bless

you, my good friends and Fellowship members—we have all failed miserably to come through with the necessary means to make it possible. It could have been acquired with enough of the thing we call money—and not one of us can take any with him when he is called from this earth. But again I say—Ward—and all of us—are far better men and women for the time we have spent in contemplation and remembrance of the thoughts given to us here by Abraham Lincoln—and which most of us have treated far too carelessly and lightly.

You see I speak of simple things and plainly—because we should. Far be it, for me, a business man, to find fault with anyone or his choice of providing for himself and his loved ones in the necessary struggle for existence. But I want to emphasize the fact that whether we approach the Lincoln thought, expressed here so simply and so effectively;—as an incidental thing connected with our daily lives—or as a truly great spiritual impact and force for shaping and bettering the lives of all—we cannot be, whether we be only remotely or whether more intimately associated with this atomic-like, forceful idea expressed here in that fitting dedication ceremony—remain unchanged. For any Association with these great ideas will affect every such one for the better.



But how much greater and better would the world be today if that spark which Lincoln struck here “four score and seven years ago,” had found tinder and fuel in our hearts and burned into a brilliant fire. Such a warming fire in us should awaken our responsibility to protect and guard our freedoms. We would not only understand and appreciate our liberty and freedom which our forefathers struggled to gain for us, but we would continue to struggle to gain the same for others.

Lincoln’s heart bled more surely than did the brave soldier whose arm was slashed off in battle. Do you realize and believe this? The other day a pair of hoodlums attempted our president’s life—wounding several guards and causing one to die. The President was deeply affected by the guard’s death—and we appreciate his feelings—but that death was no different than that which thousands of our sons and loved ones are called on to face and suffer on the battlefields of Korea. I know the President recognizes from his own war service the bravery, gallantry and suffering of our men in service—but we cannot believe some things would be permitted if he genuinely felt the death of our G.I.’s as intensely as he did that of his loyal guard who fell right at his doorstep. All of us find it too easy to pass over lightly that which goes

on at a distance. The old adage "Out of sight, out of mind", applies. But we know that Lincoln suffered the tortures of a father each hour as he contemplated the suffering of those serving in the war, and he felt equally the physical suffering of the enemy; for all were brothers—all citizens of our country—War and killing could gain nothing and he knew it. His was a great compassion and understanding. He was suffering just such anguish—when his mind recalled the simple but well learned lessons from His Bible, his American History book, and from Nature, And so he prayed for Divine Guidance and help. Our ever-present God did not neglect him. Thus developed this dedication piece. It came out of His suffering, tortured soul as it was reflected through his understanding mind. This was to serve, in some measure, as a free nation's expression of understanding and gratitude for "the great work which the soldiers had so nobly advanced."

His thoughts kept going to the heart of the matter and he realized that the Great Truths he wanted to tell the people could be misunderstood and cause criticism if he explained overly much. He intended to be humble and modest. We gain clearly this idea, when he said, "The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here."

Withal he was masterful, and in his brevity called up the heavy artillery of Truth and with deadly, accurate aim and in such a burst that has flashed down through the years he struck straight at the mark, when he said "That this nation under God, shall have a *new birth of Freedom*".

May I refer again to a religious analogy. Some of us believe in infant baptism. We know our introduction to Christianity began thus. We grew and our understanding grew also. We learned with the passing of years. Our parents or some adults were our sponsors and they were charged with the responsibility of seeing that we grew up in a Christian manner. When we matured, we confirmed the vows taken by our sponsors. If we sincerely sought forgiveness and claimed the Lord Jesus as our God, we were touched individually and personally by the spirit of God. By accepting the Lord Jesus as our Lord and our God, we were reborn or "born again". That is definitely essential for a genuine faith, and it is experienced by all True Believers. We then proceed and earnestly desire to live a Christ-like life, and *for* Christ, the living God.

Therefore, if we truly understand the message of Lincoln's Address, we will let His "thought-spark", kindle a fire of genuine enthusiasm in our mind and heart and spirit. We will go forth and not only vigilantly safeguard our hard-won liberty and freedom but we will strive to make these available to others. If all of us caught the spirit of Lincoln at Gettysburg, we would burn with a passionate desire to do something about it.

We should be a dynamic organization. We should serve to spread Lincoln's Freedom Message, in a manner as does the American Bible Society, that prepares and provides copies without number, of the Holy Bible and especially the Gospels. We should everlastingly and continually seek to prepare and distribute—copies of the Gettysburg

Address—as long as one human being remains, who is denied Freedom. The people of Gettysburg—indeed people of our state and nation, could do a genuine service by preparing and distributing hundreds of millions of copies of this great message. It should be done year after year. It should be available in all languages and dialects—and continue until everyone, wherever he may be, could have had the opportunity to read and study and reflect on this message of cheer and encouragement. Even more important we who have been so richly blessed, and who are here gathered together, should be aware of the Truths of this great message. Through our re-awakened selves, we should demonstrate in our lives that it is really something to be an American and a lover of Freedom. We should forever guard our freedoms. We should seek every good means actively to educate and develop an awareness and appreciation of these values in others, and through them for others, and others, and yet others. If we caught the real message here then we would not be seeking larger and more social security, fine as that idea may be for its help to our less fortunate neighbors. We would not be seeking out special privileges, subsidies, bigger pensions, more “pork barrel” spending and the like. We would know that our United States, or any country like the United States, could be strong only as its citizens are strong. We would rather support its laws, we would surely assist the forces established to preserve law and order, maintain justice and certainly avoid complacency and smugness.

Then, and then only would we be really honoring our heroic forefathers, and the generations of their sons who succeeded them—indeed honoring all those who fought for our freedoms, and the many who laid down their lives for all and each of us—privileged to be living today. I wish to speak no platitudes, nor do I strive for any oratorical effects—These men and boys who went through “hell on earth”—will surely have died in vain, if we, the living—fail to rededicate our lives to this great unfinished work, which they so nobly advanced. We must dedicate ourselves to that great task remaining before us, and take increased devotion, to that cause for which they here gave their last full measure of devotion. This applies equally well to the memory of all Americans and freedom-loving men who have fallen in battle or who have made sacrifices in their genuine endeavor for the common good. Then may we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain.

We will, in fact, make sure that *this nation*, under God, shall have a new Birth of Freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.



George W Gibson

. 50

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA

973.7L63N1863GYLUH

C001

INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF LINCOLN'S GETTY



3 0112 031832907